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MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

Initiative 26 supporters dispel rumors

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

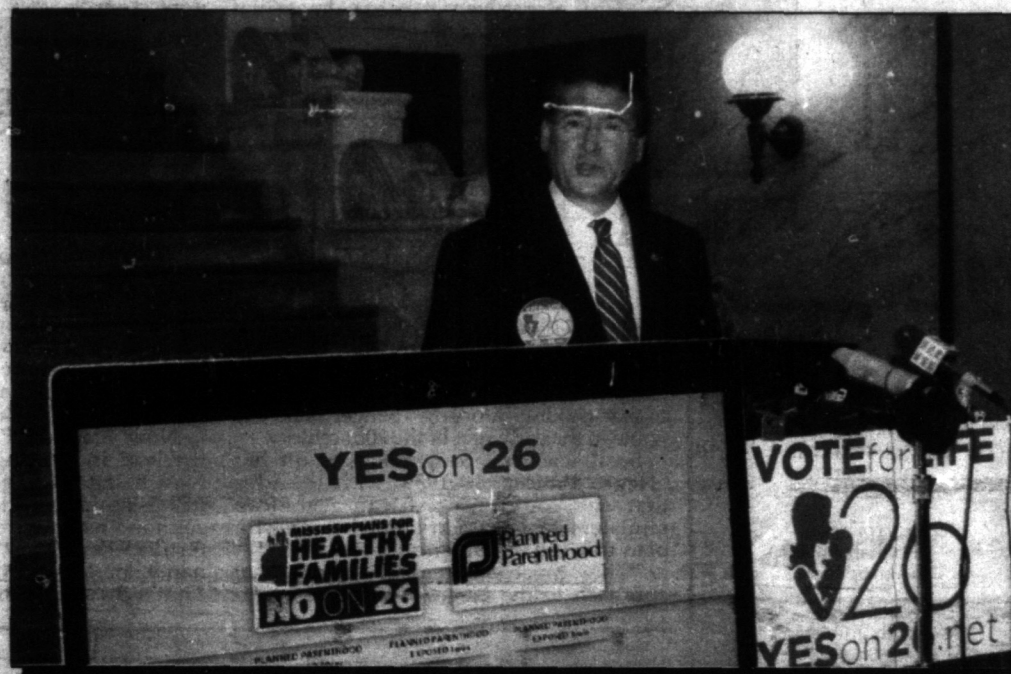
Supporters of Initiative 26, also known as the Personhood Amendment, took their campaign to the Mississippi State Capital on Oct. 31 and released what they say is evidence of rumor mongering and misleading information being promoted by opponents of the measure.

Brad Prewitt, executive director of Yes on 26, accused out-of-state Planned Parenthood affiliates, some of the partners that incorporated Mississippians for Healthy Families a few weeks ago to fight Initiative 26, of frightening women into believing birth control pills will not be available if the measure passes during the statewide general election on Nov. 8.

Prewitt played an audio recording provided by Live Action, a national pro-life group, in which a volunteer posing as a concerned citizen allegedly called the Planned Parenthood Southeast office in Hattiesburg and inquired about the availability of birth control pills after Initiative 26 passes.

The unidentified woman on the telephone in what Live Action says is the Planned Parenthood Southeast office in Hattiesburg told the volunteer, "So far as we know, birth control will still be available."

Prewitt also criticized opponents of Initiative 26 for sug-



INITIATIVE 26 — U.S. Rep. Gregg Harper, R.-Ms., discusses his support for Initiative 26, also known as the Personhood Amendment, during an Oct. 31 press conference at the Mississippi State Capital in downtown Jackson. Supporters of Initiative 26 have accused Planned Parenthood and other opponents of using deceptive tactics and spreading lies to frighten Mississippians into voting against the measure in the statewide general election on Nov. 8. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

gesting that pregnant women could die or be jailed if the measure passes. He urged Mississippians with questions to visit the web site, Yeson26.com. Other speakers at the press conference included:

- Mississippi Congressman Gregg Harper, a strong supporter of Initiative 26 and member of Crossgates Church, Brandon.
- Jimmy Porter, executive director of the Christian Action Commission of the Mississippi Baptist Convention, who has endorsed Initiative 26.

- Tim Wildmon, president of the American Family Association in Tupelo.

- Anne Reed of Tupelo, an AFA employee.

- Walter Hoyer, an African-American spokesman for Colorado-based Personhood USA, who termed abortion in the African-American community "genocide."

- Beverly McMillan, a retired OB-GYN physician who once performed abortions and now serves as president of Pro-Life Mississippi. She said doctors and medical organizations who have announced their opposition to Initiative 26 have

been "sucked in by the lies of Planned Parenthood."

- Ashley Sigrest, a member of Crossgates Church, Brandon, who said she regrets the abortion she underwent after being raped at the age of 17. "My rape was nothing compared to what happened to my child," Sigrest said. "I'm over the rape. The abortion is still with me."

In a separate Initiative 26-related story, Joe Young, pastor of Calvary Chapel Church in Drew, reported that he received a telephone call in the early afternoon of October 30, shortly after returning home from church.

"While enjoying my lunch between church services, I got a call from 'Unavailable.' A person with a distinctly foreign accent asked me if I was aware of

Polls will open at 7 a.m. on November 8, giving Mississippians an unprecedented opportunity to vote on the issue of personhood. For more information on Initiative 26, visit Yeson26.com and Christianaction.com.

Proposition 26 on the Mississippi ballot. I said that I was aware, and he began asking if I would vote 'No.' I told him that I planned to vote for Amendment 26 and that it was the conviction of my heart.

"I asked him if it was his conviction or just his job to ask me to vote 'No.' He admitted that he just worked for a company (that) told him to solicit my 'No' vote and that he didn't even know what the measure was.

"I asked him if he was from Mississippi or if he just worked for someone who wanted to influence Mississippi law. He thanked me for my time."

Other Mississippians have reported similar calls, apparently the work of a boiler room phone bank operation.

MBC in session



Gary Richardson, president of the Mississippi Baptist Convention and pastor of North Oxford Church, Oxford, gavels the 176th annual session of the convention to order on the morning of Nov. 1 in the worship center of First Church, Jackson. Full coverage of the annual session will be available in the Nov. 10 issue of The Baptist Record. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

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Confronting evil, here and now

Frankly I had thought that at the time Roe was decided, there was concern about population growth and particularly growth in populations that we don't want to have too many of. — U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, *New York Times Magazine*, July 12, 2009

The "Roe" to which Ginsburg is referring in the above quote is, of course, *Roe v. Wade*, the infamous 1973 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that legalized abortion in all 50 states during the entire nine months of pregnancy.

If there has been one contention of pro-lifers that has drawn the most ridicule from the political and social elites who support the concept of abortion at any time and under all conditions, it is the contention that the procedure is a most effective means of accomplishing eugenics — a term coined by Planned Parenthood founder Margaret Sanger as a way to explain her organization's efforts to control certain populations.

The mass of Negroes, particularly in the South, still breed carelessly and disastrously, with the result that the increase among Negroes, even more than among whites, is from the portion of the population least intelligent and fit, and least able to rear children properly," Sanger famously wrote in the early part of the 20th century.

So it was that Sanger kicked off her "Negro Project" in 1939, with the idea that she could use African American ministers to help carry out her ghastly plan to wipe out an entire race.

"The most successful educational approach to the Negro is through a reli-

gious appeal," she wrote condescendingly. "We do not want the word to get out that we want to exterminate the Negro population, and the minister is the man who can straighten out that idea if it occurs to any of their more rebellious members."

Switch to the present. Contrast those words with the pronouncement of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg in the July 12 issue of *New York Times Magazine*, as quoted at the beginning of this commentary, and there's not an ounce of difference. The pro-lifers are right, after all.

It is troubling to know that supporters of Sanger's and Ginsburg's vision remain committed even after 70 years and a civil rights revolution. Sanger's Planned Parenthood organization, now the largest abortion provider in the country and the recipient of over 300 million dollars annually in taxpayer funds from the federal government, has been wildly successful in the ghastly work of Sanger that Ginsburg apparently supports wholeheartedly.

Now Planned Parenthood has taken the lead in fighting Initiative 26 on the Nov. 8 statewide general election ballot in Mississippi, which would define personhood as occurring at the moment of fertilization — but you won't find their name on any of the anti-26 handouts. That's because they joined with the

ACLU to incorporate Mississippians for Healthy Families, as a front group in their war on Initiative 26.

Alveda King, head of Priests for Life and a niece of civil rights icon Martin Luther King Jr., writes that although African Americans make up only 12% of the U.S. population, 35% of all abortions in the country are performed on African Americans.

"We are the only minority in America that is on the decline in population. If the

current trend continues, by 2038 the black vote will be insignificant," she observed.

The moral here is

that evil can be fought and overcome by good people, but it never really goes away. In fact, Satan regrouping and reappears wherever he can, using whatever means necessary to win.

In this case, the evil of legalized baby killing has been harnessed to advance the evil of eugenics, which has been harnessed to advance the evil of racism, which has been harnessed to advance the evil of genocide, which has been harnessed to advance the destruction of the soul of mankind. That is Satan's ultimate goal, isn't it?

We know how the struggle with evil will ultimately be resolved, but has our generation really sunk to the level of banally accepting infanticide, eugenics, racism, and genocide as part of our culture?

On Nov. 8, we can begin to make a difference. Vote Yes on Initiative 26.

VOTEforLIFE
26
YESon26.net



GUEST OPINION:

Pro-Life/Pro-Choice: Which One?

By Jimmy Porter
Mississippi Baptist Christian
Action Commission



ever cast. We will be electing a Governor and other officials who will serve their time and move on, but this vote has ramifications that will have eternal consequences. You will be making a decision that will affect this and future generations.

You can be sure a YES vote for Initiative 26 will please our Heavenly Father who said to Jeremiah, "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you. Before you were born I sanctified you." If our Lord knew Jeremiah before He formed him in the womb, then is it not reasonable to believe He also knew the sixty million who have been aborted these past four decades? Voting for life is affirming the fact that life is precious and created in the Image of God.

You can be sure that a YES vote is a pro-life vote opposing

abortion. A NO vote is a vote supporting abortion. It is as simple as that. There is no middle ground. Deuteronomy 30:19 states, "This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now, choose life, so that you and your children may live." (NIV) The Israelites had to make some difficult decisions, but in those circumstances God said, "Choose life."

You can be sure that a YES vote defines you as being pro-life. You will have displayed the ability to sift through all the lies, half-truths, and scare tactics of Planned Parenthood and the ACLU and make an intelligent decision based on facts and faith. You will have listened to your heart and remained faithful to your Christian heritage.

The battle is heating up and will continue to do so until November 8. Therefore, I am asking you to emphasize Initiative 26 this Sunday in your churches. Dr. Futral has produced a short video that can be downloaded from www.mbc.org and shown during morning worship. Also I am asking our Mississippi Baptist churches to open their doors from 6 to 8 p.m. on Monday night, November 7, for people to come pray for the election and Initiative 26. This will allow the membership to come anytime during those two hours, find a place in the worship center and pray.

The leadership of our convention asked you for fifty million pennies for the Memorial To The Missing and you responded. Now we are asking you to go a step beyond by supporting and voting YES on Initiative 26. I, along with Mississippi Baptist Convention leadership, thank you for your YES vote on Tuesday, November 8.

Porter is executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission. He can be contacted at 601-292-3332 or at jporter@christianaction.com.

Name change task force has first meeting

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP) — The task force appointed to study the prospect of changing the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) name held its first meeting on Oct. 26 at Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth.

Convention President Bryant Wright announced the 20-member task force during the opening session of the SBC Executive Committee's Sept. 19-20 meeting in Nashville. The announcement prompted a lively debate across the convention about the pros and cons of making such a change. The 16 task force members spent "a great deal" of time in prayer, aware of the far-reaching implications a name change would have, task force chairman Jimmy Draper said in an Oct. 26 statement.

"We spent a great deal of time in prayer, believing that we need God's guidance and divine wisdom as we seek to serve Southern Baptists in this consideration," Draper said. "We received a review of the history of the SBC name issue and are aware of the weighty matters that have been brought to light by previous studies and considerations."

The committee's work centers on whether the Southern Baptist mission would be advanced by a name change, Draper added. "We are driven by only one great question — how can Southern Baptists be most faithful in reaching people for Jesus. Our concern is not public relations, politics, positioning, or personal agendas," Draper said.

"We must ask ourselves constantly if there is anything that would help us to reach more people, plant more churches,



Draper

and penetrate lostness here in the United States and around the world as we seek to fulfill the Great Commission."

Draper's statement said he appreciated "the responsible quality" of the group's first discussion and affirmed the need for input from both rank-and-file Southern Baptists and those in positions of leadership. He said he would be contacting leaders for their input and that others can interact with the task force through a website, www.pray4sbc.com.

Name change suggestions can be entered in a box that accepts up to 50 characters, while the form for submitting comments has been expanded beyond the 140-character limit originally in place.

LifeWay Christian Resources also has been asked to research the potential impact of a name change among unchurched people, Draper said.

The task force understands its charge is limited to reporting back to Wright and that no one believed the word "Baptist" should be removed from the name, Draper added.

"We also want to let Southern Baptists know that we do understand our task. We are a body appointed by the SBC president, and to him we will submit our report. We are not authorized to change the name of the convention, nor are we certain that such a change is right. We do know that it is right to ask the question, and to consider our name in light of our mission," Draper said.

"We also want Southern Baptists to know that we, as a task force, are unified in affirming that we are and will ever remain Baptist — and that name is more than a label, it is a testimony. We cannot envision a name change that would not include 'Baptist' in the name."

The full text of the task force statement follows:

"The Task Force appointed by Southern Baptist Convention President Bryant Wright to study the possibility of changing the name of our convention met for our first meeting October 26, 2011 in Fort Worth, Texas.

Sixteen of the twenty members of the task force were in attendance, and the meeting was graciously hosted by Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

We spent a great deal of time in prayer, believing that we need God's guidance and divine wisdom as we seek to serve Southern Baptists in this consideration. We spent time in prayer, together and in small groups, and then turned to the matters at hand.

We received a review of the history of the SBC name issue and are aware of the weighty matters that have been brought to light by previous studies and considerations.

We are driven by only one great question — how can Southern Baptists be most faithful in reaching people for Jesus. Our concern is not public relations, politics, positioning or personal agendas. We must ask ourselves constantly if there is anything that would help us to reach more people, plant more churches, and penetrate lostness here in the United States and around the world as we seek to fulfill the Great Commission.

I am thankful for the responsible quality of our first discussion.

The committee is representative of the Southern Baptist Convention, ranging from pastors of some of our oldest churches to those who are planting new churches far outside of the southern states. The task force is diverse in composition, but united in our singular purpose to serve all Southern Baptists in this work.

We know that we need more information. I will be writing Southern Baptist leaders ranging from the heads of our entities to the leaders of our state conventions. We will be asking all Southern Baptists to let their concerns and convictions be known. We have asked LifeWay Research (a ministry of LifeWay Christian Resources) to research the issue of our name among the very people we are trying to reach — the unreached.

We also want to let Southern Baptists know that we do understand our task. We are a body appointed by the SBC president, and to him we will submit our report. We are not authorized to change the name of the convention, nor are we certain that such a change is right. We do know that it is right to ask the question, and to consider our name in light of our mission.

We also want Southern Baptists to know that we, as a task force, are unified in affirming that we are and will ever remain Baptist — and that name is more than a label, it is a testimony. We cannot envision a name change that would not include "Baptist" in the name.

We will meet again to continue our conversation and we are eager to hear from Southern Baptists. We want to thank the hundreds of Southern Baptists who have sent us letters, emails, and other communications. Please communicate with us at pray4sbc.com.

We know that Southern Baptists are very interested in this conversation and passionate about our mission and identity. That is a sign of our health and vitality. We will report once the task force has met again."

No Mississippi Baptists were named to serve on the task force.



Looking back

10 years ago

Christians living in Islamic lands pay a price for the U.S. — led war on terrorism in Afghanistan, as angry Muslims retaliate for what they see as an attack on their religion by the Christian West.

20 years ago

The oldest and largest Baptist state conventions face significant problems due to smaller budgets and strained income. "Everybody is experiencing a decline except Mississippi," says Barry Allen, director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's business division.

30 years ago

Only one Southern Baptist Church — First Church, Dallas, Tex. — exceeds 10,000 members, but 19 other churches have over 5,000, according to the Quarterly Review. First Church, Jackson, counts 5,028 members in 19th place.



THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

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YOU CAN RESPOND
RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

BIBLIOCIPHER

By Charles Marx, 1932 - 2004
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FSI YMJ PNSL XMFQQ
FSXBJW FSI XFD ZSYT
YMJR, AJWNQD N XFD
ZSYT DTZ, NSFRRZHM
FX DJ MFAJ ITSJ NY
ZSYT TSJ TK YMJ QJFYX
TK YMJXJ RD
GWJYMWJS DJ MFAJ
ITSJ NY ZSYT RJ.
RFYYMJB YBJSYD-KNAJ:
KTWYD

Clue D = Y

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Mark Eleven: Twenty-four

STOP CHANGING MY TIME

It was November 2007 when the government announced that they were going to change our time again. Daylight Saving Time was extended by four weeks from the second Sunday of March to the first Sunday of November. You know the yearly routine — spring forward and fall back in the middle of the night on Saturday. Supposedly, they gave us back the hour that they had taken from us in the Spring. Leading up to that day I heard people talking about the time change coming. This was the good one because we get our hour back. One fellow told me that he had been waiting to get that hour back that they had stolen from him and he was tickled to death. Other people talked about how they would sleep another hour.

I wish that they would leave my time alone. About the time my internal clock gets adjusted to where we are, they change it again. While I try to be flexible and try to go with the flow on a lot of this stuff, I do not like it when they change the time. It gets dark at 5 o'clock, it is cold, and it just affects my whole being and especially my attitude.

As I thought about it, I decided that it might be a good idea for the folks in the Baptist Building not to go along with the program. We will just keep Daylight Savings Time all year long and keep that afternoon hour as long as we can. If everybody else wants to do it another way, that is their business. Go ahead! For the staff of the Baptist Building, we will hold on to what was and live by a different clock.

The more I thought about it the more I wondered why the government doesn't just give us the option to choose whether or not we want to go to the new time, stay with the old time, or fix our own time. You can just set your clock the way that you want to set it because it seems that everywhere you turn people want to express their individuality and do what they want when they want. Just announce that you are going to pick a time schedule and set your 24 hours anyway that you want to have it.

Now as I processed that thought it occurred to me that I better not say too much about it because somebody would pick up on it in Congress. They would slip it into some bill that is moving through, and we would end up with a plan like that. Can you imagine the chaos that would create if everybody just set their clocks and operated the way they would like?

Some of you may be thinking that is crazy. That would never work and the whole reasoning process is warped. You are right! On the other hand, there have been times when



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

the people of God in more ways than just related to time have done this sort of thing. Listen to the last verse of the Book of Judges. It closes by saying, "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes." (Judg. 21:25). This, of course, is pointing to the moral standards of a people and goes way beyond time frames. However, the principle is always true for a society to have order and for people to be able to live in a relationship with each other. There must be laws and standards or everything will be in disarray and chaos ensues.

It is for that reason that the Age of the Judges is often referred to as the dark ages of Israel. It did not matter who was leading because they were not going to follow. It did not matter what standards were put in place because they were not going to obey. Every man just followed his own opinions and forgot everybody else. Have you ever seen a church filled with individuals who followed that kind of thought? They live in disagreement. There is a little group over here, another group over there, and three more over here. Just doing what you want to when you want to in church lives itself out in a lot of odd expressions.

Some folks do not want to sing the song that is being sung, but they want everyone to sing their song. They do not like the instruments being played, but they want to hear the instruments they want played. They may not like the lesson that is being studied in a class, but they want to study something they want. They do not like the time of the services and would prefer to have the services when they want them to be held. They do not like the temperature in the sanctuary, but they want everybody to live in the climate range that they prefer.

I understand all of that but as with everybody picking their own time and schedule, it cannot be done just to satisfy you or me. A man told me one time that we just ought to follow the pattern that is in the Bible. He was referring to the time of worship found in the Scripture. That may sound spiritual and it may have a holy ring about it but the only problem is there is no "the time" to meet for worship. The early Christians met at various times on Sunday

including at night. At least on one occasion, Paul was preaching and it went on until midnight. Not many people want to do that. The Book of Acts also says they met every day in fellowship and praise. Obviously, a lot of folks would revolt against that idea. We are called together in a fellowship of love and we are instructed to join with the people of God and not forsake the assembling of ourselves together. It seems as though there were times where obviously many people had to be flexible in order to be a part of that experience with God and His people. That has not changed.

I will adjust to the new time and as soon as I do, the new time becomes the old time. Another new time will come, and I will adjust to it as well. When it comes to worshipping God, Malachi was exactly right when he wrote that God said, "I am the Lord, I change not" (Mal. 3:6). When we come together to sing, pray, and be moved by His presence, we would be wise to be graciously flexible and fit into a time frame

to maximize an experience with our living God in the context of a great fellowship of God's people, whether that event is at 8:00 a.m. on Sunday morning, at 7 o'clock on Wednesday night, or while leading a Bible Study as a part of a mission team.

The main thing involved in all of these changes, creative opportunities, and new possibilities that exist are not shaped by age or generational differences but by our attitudes — young or old. I was in a church that was having a special Saturday event at which I was supposed to speak and then we were going out visiting to cover the neighborhoods. When I arrived on Saturday morning, several people were already there. The first person that arrived ready to go was a man in his nineties. That, my friends, is the shaping of the Spirit of God in your life and not just accepting or complaining about a new way of doing things.

Paul said in Galatians, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against which there is no law" (Gal. 5:22-23). That is a description of people who have teachable spirits and adjustable attitudes because of the presence of the Lord in their lives. So set your clocks, get up, go to church, and smile!

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MS POSITIONS

CENTER RIDGE BAPTIST CHURCH OF YAZOO COUNTY IS SEEKING A PART TIME MUSIC DIRECTOR. For details call 662-571-8388 or 662-746-1328.

DAMASCUS BAPTIST CHURCH, MADISON COUNTY MS IS ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR A BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR. Please mail resumes to the church at: PO Box 846, Flora, MS 39071. Attention: Pastor Search Committee.

OAK HILL B.C. IN MERIDIAN IS LOOKING FOR A PART-TIME MINISTER OF YOUTH. Resumes can be emailed to: mike.ohbc@comcast.net or mailed to: OHBC P.O. Box 3938, Meridian, MS 39303.

FULL-TIME YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S MINISTER Gaston Baptist Church in Booneville, MS is seeking someone to give leadership in growing an established youth ministry, and provide direction in building a ministry to children. Please send resumes to Darryl Hatfield, Gaston Baptist Church, 1908 Gaston Road, Booneville, MS or gastonbaptistchu@bellsouth.net

YAZOO COUNTY BAPTIST ASSOCIATION IS NOW RECEIVING RESUMES FOR THE POSITION OF ASSOCIATIONAL MISSIONS DIRECTOR. This is a bi-vocational position. Please mail resumes to 4794 Mechanicsburg Road, Benton, MS 39040, attention: Jimmy Wayne Pettis.

MURPHY CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH, LOUISVILLE, MS IS SEEKING A PART-TIME YOUTH DIRECTOR. Send resume and application letter to include 3 references to the Youth Director Search Committee, 5420 Bond Road, Louisville, MS 39339 or via email to rustyfoister1@gmail.com.

CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH IN BROOKHAVEN, MS IS SEEKING A PART-TIME MINISTER OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH. Resumes may be emailed to questions@cbcbrookhaven.org or mailed to P.O. Box 591, Brookhaven, MS 39602.

NEW SIGHT BAPTIST CHURCH, BROOKHAVEN, MS IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL MUSIC DIRECTOR. Send resumes to: Charlotte Newell, 1017 Common Street, Wesson, MS. 39191 or email to wanchar2353@att.net.

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Jailed Iranian pastor told to read Muslim literature

TEHRAN (BP) — A jailed Iranian pastor who could be put to death for his faith has been given Islamic literature and been asked to read it, a move potentially meant to trap him into a blasphemy conviction.

The American Center for Law & Justice (ALCJ) and Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) — two groups that have monitored the case for months — say that if pastor Yousef Nadarkhani reads the literature and says anything negative about Islam, he could be charged with blasphemy. Both groups say Nadarkhani has been advised not to read the literature.

"Any criticism of their contents would open the way to charges of blasphemy," Christian Solidarity Worldwide said in a statement on its website.

The case has grown muddled in recent weeks. Although Nadarkhani

was charged with blasphemy after his 2009 arrest, Iranian officials in October denied that the charge was blasphemy and instead claimed the charge was of a security nature. They even said he had run a brothel, a charge that outside groups said was false and was meant to distract the international community. The ACLJ reported Oct. 26 that their contacts confirm Nadarkhani is still alive. He and his supporters are awaiting a decision on his fate by Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

"International pressure against the Iranian regime continues to mount — but it must be sustained until Pastor Youcef is released unconditionally," ACLJ said in a statement.

Nadarkhani was arrested in 2009 after complaining that his son was being taught Islam in school. He eventually was

sentenced to death. Earlier this year the Iranian Supreme Court upheld the death sentence but ordered a lower court to examine whether Nadarkhani was ever a Muslim — a fact essential to determine whether he left Islam for Christianity.

The lower court in Rasht, Iran, found that although Nadarkhani was never a practicing Muslim "he remains guilty of apostasy because he has Muslim ancestry," reported Christian Solidarity Worldwide, which monitors religious freedom.

In late September of this year, he was given four chances to recant his faith in court and refused each time. His case then was referred to the ayatollah.

Nadarkhani's refusal to recant his faith has inspired Christians worldwide. The ACLJ reported one of his court exchanges: "Repent means to return. What should I return to? To the blasphemy that I had before my faith in Christ?" he asked.

"To the religion of your ancestors, Islam," the judge reportedly replied. "I cannot," Nadarkhani responded.



Nadarkhani

REVIVALS AND HOMECOMINGS

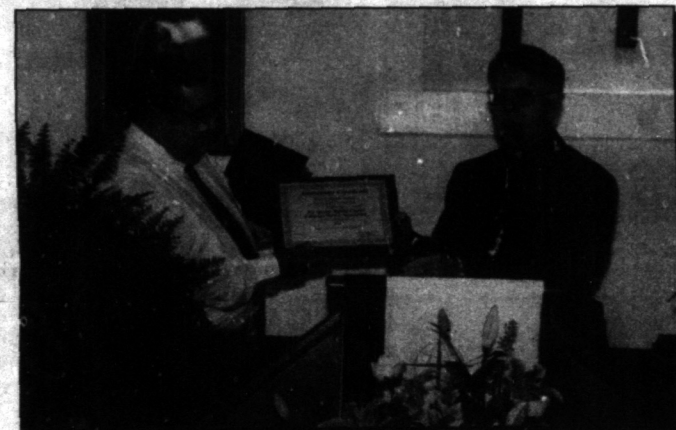
1. **Phillipston Church, Phillipston:** Revival, Nov. 11 - 12; Fri. - Sat., 7 p.m.; Sun. Harvest Day, 11 a.m., followed by lunch; Tommy Clark, speaker; Cricket Sims, music.

2. **Bay Springs Church, Abbeville:** celebrated its 175th anniversary Oct. 16 with over 225 members, family, and friends attending. Jim Burke, Associational Missions Director of the Lafayette/Marshall Association, presented a plaque to pastor Larry Singleton from the association and an anniversary certificate from the Mississippi Baptist Historical Commission. Shown are Singleton and Burke.

3. **Beacon Street Church, Philadelphia:** Revival, Nov. 7, 14, and 21; 7 p.m.; Phil Fancher, Dwight Fleming, and Hugh Martin, speakers; William Savell, Tanya Kilpatrick, and Richard Boykins, music; Wayne Hill, pastor.

4. **North Winona Church, Winona:** Revival, Nov. 6 - 9; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Wayne Hudson, speaker; Steve and Becky Carver, music.

5. **Seminary Church, Seminary:** 125th anniversary and homecoming, Nov. 5 - 6; Sat., music and speaking, 4 p.m.; Sun., services, 10 a.m., followed by dinner on the grounds.



2. Bay Springs Church, Abbeville



7. Shady Grove Church, Lucedale

6. **Highland Church, Crystal Springs:** 5th annual homecoming, Nov. 6; services, 10:30 a.m. followed by dinner on the ground; Tyson Windom, speaker.

7. **Shady Grove Church, Lucedale:** celebrated its

125th anniversary Oct. 23. Members celebrated the event by dressing as people would have in 1886, and men of the church grew beards to honor the charter members. Shown are some of the participants.

JUST FOR THE RECORD



1. Collier ordination



2. Crystal Ridge Church, Louisville



5. Roseland Park Church, Picayune



7. Harvison licensing

1. First Church, Marion, ordained Jason Collier as a deacon Aug. 28. Shown are pastor Drew Dabbs, Collier, and Renae Collier.

2. Crystal Ridge Church, Louisville, ordained Mike Robertson and Jerome Wright as deacons Oct. 16. Shown are Robertson, pastor Charles Rook, and Wright.

3. New Hope Church, Harmontown, is sponsoring a Fall Fest Oct. 28, 6 p.m., with several activities including a bouncy house.

4. First Church, Gautier, will host a community wide Thanksgiving meal Nov. 19 at no cost, noon until 4 p.m. For more information, call (228) 497-6236 and ask for Shelby.

5. The Spanish congregation of Roseland Park Church, Picayune, recently moved into their newly renovated worship center. Carl Myers, Associational Missions Director and several area churches with members of the Spanish congregation were responsible for the renovation. Shown are Marvin Mercado, pastor Walt Barnes, and Myers.

6. First Church, Flora, is hosting Paul Saik in concert Nov. 6, 6 p.m. A love offering will be received.

7. Thompson Church, Smithdale, licensed Bill Harvison to the ministry Oct. 16. Shown are interim pastor David Millican, Harvison, and Candy Harvison.

9. New Blackjack Church, Neshoba County, ordained Toby Stovall Oct. 2. He is serving as interim pastor at the church. He is shown with his wife, Linda.

10. First Church, Belzoni, honored pastor George C. Johnson and his wife Linda with Pastor Appreciation Day. Special guest speakers and singers were Jim & Dorothy Armstrong and Matthew Johnson. The couple were honored with lunch, a money tree, and a fall door wreath. Shown are the Johnsons.

11. Calvary Church, Quitman, honored pastor Dennis E. Coats Oct. 16



9. The Stovalls



10. The Johnsons



11. Coats and Crosby

for Pastor Appreciation Day. Coats has been pastor at Calvary for 28 years. Shown are Coats and Jim Crosby.

12. The members of Neshoba Church, Union, express their love and respect to pastor Johnny Collins, shown, upon his achieving his Doctorate Degree in theology.

13. Clear Branch Church, Wesson, is hosting Karen Peck & New River in concert Nov. 5, 6 p.m. A love offering will be received.



12. Collins

Study contradicts view that homosexuals can't change

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — A major seven-year study published in a mainstream journal is challenging the secular notion that gays and lesbians cannot change their sexual orientation.

The longitudinal study followed 61 subjects for between six and seven years and found that 23% of them reported successful conversion to heterosexual orientation and function and another 30% reported stable behavioral chastity with a significant dis-identification with gay orientation.

Twenty percent of the subjects had given up and embraced a gay identity.

It is believed to be the first study of its kind — that is, one that followed people over a series of years and monitored success or failure. The study followed subjects who voluntarily were taking part in Christian ministries affiliated with Exodus International, the nation's largest ministry devoted exclusively to reaching out to homosexuals.

Partial results of the study were released in 2007 and 2009 but now are

being published in a peer-reviewed journal, which its authors hope gives it more credibility to those who had criticized it. The study is published in the Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy, Volume 37.

"The results that we report in our study suggest that change is definitely not impossible, and it's probably not uncommon, either," coauthor Stanton L. Jones, a psychologist at Wheaton College, told Baptist Press. "That doesn't mean that change is easy. We think that these results need to be taken into account as a way of respecting the religious freedom of individuals."

Baptist Press reported on the earlier findings in '07 and '09. Having the study published in a peer-reviewed journal, Jones said, is significant.

"It signifies that the methodology meets the basic requirements for being taken seriously as a piece of scientific literature," Jones said. "Critics still dismiss the study. They say, 'Well, it's only one study,' or they say it's not a large

enough sample, but I think the study stands as a significant challenge to the reigning views on this matter, especially given that the major mental health organizations say in alternate voices that change of sexual orientation is impossible or that change in sexual orientation is highly unlikely."

A statement on the American Psychological Association's website says that promotion of change therapy "contributes to a negative climate for lesbian, gay, and bisexual persons."

"All major national mental health organizations have officially expressed concerns about therapies promoted to modify sexual orientation," the APA statement says. "To date, there has been no scientifically adequate research to show that therapy aimed at changing sexual orientation... is safe or effective."

Changing attitudes on the subject isn't easy, Jones said. Stories about gay people who tried but didn't change tend to get more media attention, he said. Also, he noted, the issue has

become political. When Attorney General Eric Holder announced in February that the Justice Department would no longer defend the Defense of Marriage Act, part of Holder's reasoning was that there's "a growing scientific consensus... that sexual orientation is a characteristic that is immutable."

The study by Jones and coauthor Mark A. Yarhouse of Regent University directly challenges that argument.

"To admit that the study has any validity is to draw into question... the change in [public] policies," Jones said. "The study does not examine why some people are more successful in changing their orientation than others. We can't answer that," Jones said.

Some critics say the study was deficient because it did not record the physical responses of subjects to sexual stimulus. In some mainstream circles, that is done by placing pornography in front of the subjects and either monitoring the physical response or monitoring the brain for a response.

JUST FOR THE RECORD

1. Morrison Heights Church, Clinton, is sponsoring an adult literacy ministry, Christian Adult Reading Enrichment (C.A.R.E.), and is looking for tutors. The next Adult Reading/Writing Tutor Training Workshop is Nov. 11 and 12 from 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. A fee of \$25 will go toward the cost of instructional materials. For more information, call (601) 918-1600 or 925-6480, or e-mail ChistianAdultReading@gmail.com.

2. First Church, Terry, recently ordained Jonathan Sherwin to the gospel ministry. Shown are pastor Willie Welch of New Prospect Church, Kristi Sherwin, Sherwin, Wiley Reed, and pastor John Pace.

3. Richmond Church, Tupelo, held Vacation Bible School in July. Shown are the participants. Clay Anthony, pastor.

4. First Church, Pearl, is hosting its 58th annual Pre-Thanksgiving Eve gospel singing Nov. 12, 6:30 p.m., featuring The Florida Boys, The Freemans, Chris Freeman of original Hinsons, Tim Frith and the Gospel Echoes, Revelations, and Terry Joe Terrell.

5. North Carrollton Church, North Carrollton, is sponsoring a World Day of Prayer Nov. 7, 9 - 11 a.m., with the theme In Step With



2. Sherwin ordination



8. New Sight Church, Brookhaven

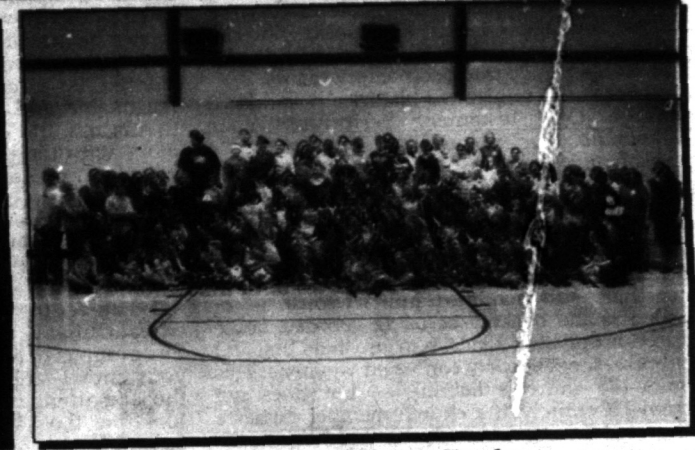
the Spirit — Kindness.

6. First Church, Shannon, is having a Harvest Day Nov. 6. Sunday School, 9 a.m.; worship, 10 a.m., followed by a potluck dinner; Ken Anderson, speaker.

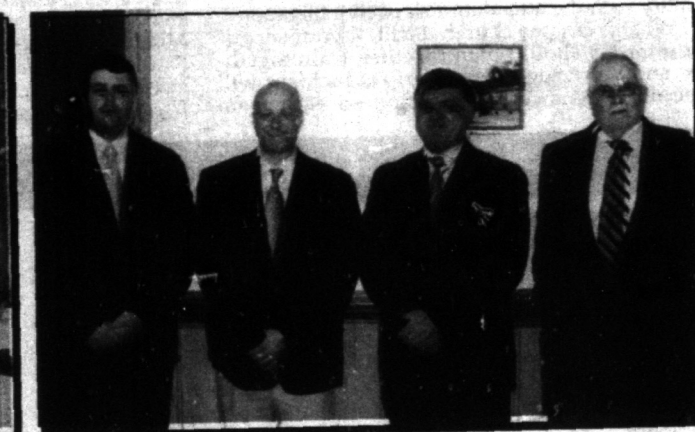
7. Goss Church, Columbia, will be hosting their 8th annual

Blessing of the Hunt Nov. 10. Doors open at 5 p.m. with door prizes beginning at 6 p.m. Hank Hough of Kingdom Dog Ministries will speak at 7 p.m.

8. The Children in Action of New Sight Church, Brookhaven, received service pins during a



3. Richmond Church, Tupelo



10. Kyle ordination

recognition service. Those receiving pins were Zach Douglas, Madison Foster, Emily Douglas, and Alexis Blackwell.

9. Catalyst South and the Simpson County Association are presenting 11/12/11, The Event, at Poplar Springs Church, Mendenhall, 6 - 8:30 p.m. Dinner, 6 p.m. Worship,

Clint Newsome; drama, PSBC youth; Scott Cockrell, speaker. Free. Doors open 5:45 p.m.

10. Liberty Church, Nettleton, ordained Joseph Kyle as deacon. Shown are Kyle, Danny Brookman, pastor Mike Tucker, and Murlis Underwood.

Church security: Training, certification help to ensure security

By Chester L. Quarles
Correspondent

Second in a seven-part, aperiodical series

Ron Aguiar, security director for the Southeast Christian Church in Louisville, Ky., directs one of the largest church security units in the United States. He designed a comprehensive security ministry for the mega-church, which includes a multi-acre campus and 14 buildings.

With the approval of his pastor, he gives security training to all ushers, deacons, and greeters. These men carry communication devices to alert others of any security or safety risk. He also established a "Nehemiah's Team" of certified police officers, based on Old Testament scriptural tenets.

The Jubilee Fellowship Church in Lone Tree, Co., calls their security ministry, "Shepherd's Watch," also basing their ministry on Nehemiah, Chapter 4. Pastor John Leach asked Raleigh Rhodes, a Certified Protection Professional and security director for a regional company, to assist him in this effort.

Many forward-thinking church security and safety ministries have blended first-responding agents including police, sheriff, fire, emergency medical technicians, and medical professionals into their safety teams.

The security ministry is historically validated through Old Testament Scripture. When Nehemiah was rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, Sanballat, Tobia, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the men of Ashod decided to "stir up trouble against it." Later, the threats were so brazen that half of the men worked while the others stayed by their weapons. They carried their arms constantly because Nehemiah turned his workmen into a military force.

One of the benefits of using certified peace officers is that their agencies insure them first and authorize them to carry concealed weapons. This limits the church's liability — but does not remove it entirely. If a church member carries a concealed firearm to church, it is that individual's responsibility. However, if the church approves gun-carrying, it assumes general legal accountability with the attendant risk of civil litigation.

Whatever your church decides, your security ministry should plan together, train together, and work together. A serious incident will require extensive coordination so each team

member knows what the other members will be doing and where they will be located during an on-going emergency.

At Southeastern Christian Church, each member of Nehemiah's Team is assigned a strategically selected seat. Some of the team members are also stationed in the choir loft, primarily to protect the pastor, but are available to intervene in any emergency. The team is always ready to respond in case a visitor or a member becomes disruptive.

Some of the security team members volunteer as doorkeepers and greeters. Should they observe a problem in the parking lot or near the church grounds, they immediately initiate radio contact with other team members, lock the doors to the church, call 911, and use other appropriate deterrent procedures.

The keys to any layered security approach are to stop trouble before it intensifies, or prevent trouble completely. By being vigilant the Guardians, the welcoming committee, and Nehemiah's Team can often spot troublemakers before they enter church buildings.

The Apostle Peter praised vigilance: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." (1 Peter 5:8).

A security ministry is not to be lightly considered. Be sure that your risk assessment is reasonable and plan accordingly. Remember to discuss the church security policies and plans with the police or sheriff's department, your local prosecutor, and your insurer.

Informing your membership is a must! Some leaders feel that members will be repelled by these procedures, but generally these applications result in a membership that feels safer in the Lord's House because of your diligence.

Whatever the title of your security and safety team, always remember that the purpose of this group is to enhance the overall ministry of your church and increase the likelihood that those in attendance at your services will come to know the saving grace of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Quarles is professor emeritus of criminal justice and homeland security at the University of Mississippi, and co-author of the book, *Crime Prevention for Houses of Worship*. He may be contacted at cquarles@olemiss.edu. Copyright 2011. Used by permission.

COLLEGE NEWS

Mississippi Humanities Teacher of the Year for WCU. She was selected by the Mississippi Humanities Council, who chooses one faculty member at each higher learning institution in the state. She was chosen based on her outstanding accomplishments and contributions to WCU.

- Eugene Owens, professor of education and music and chairman of the educational leadership program, and Barry Morris, dean of the School of Education at William Carey University, announce a new Master of Education in Education Leadership degree beginning in Winter trimester 2011.

This 36-hour degree program is designed for educators who desire to become certified in educational administration and supervision. The program will prepare students to become effective instructional leaders and school managers in elementary, middle, and secondary education settings. There will be two cohorts of 24 students each accepted into the program for Winter trimester 2011: one group at the Tradition campus in Biloxi, and one at the Hattiesburg campus. Classes begin November 7. For further information, contact Owens at (601) 318-6602 or eowens@wmcu.edu.

STAFF CHANGES

- Pleasant Hill Church, Tippah County, has called Scott Hudson as pastor. He is shown with his wife Jennifer and sons, Ethan, Will, and Jack.



1. The Hudsons

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Lofty SBC congregations goal set by NAMB chief

PHILADELPHIA (BP) — A goal of 55,901 Southern Baptist congregations by the end of 2020 has been set by North American Mission Board (NAMB) President Kevin Ezell as part of the Send North America strategy NAMB is implementing in evangelistic church planting. The goal would mean a net gain of 5,112 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) congregations in less than a decade — more gained than in any decade since 1900.

"This should be the golden age of church planting in the Southern Baptist Convention," Ezell said during the Oct. 17-19 meeting of NAMB's trustees in Philadelphia.

The growth is based on projections of new church plants, new affiliations, and church deaths between 2011 and 2020. Reaching the goal would require nearly a doubling of the SBC church birth rate by the end of the 10-year period.

The 55,901 "congregation" target includes new self-supporting churches as well as church-type missions which will become new churches at some point. The goal was shared with trustees during an informal update by Aaron Coe, vice president of mobilization at NAMB, a day before their meeting.

NAMB's trustees also approved a \$115 million budget for 2012, toured new ethnic church plants, and — with state convention and local association leaders and church planters — celebrated groundbreaking church-planting efforts now under way in the historic City of Brotherly Love.

"This trustee meeting in Philadelphia has been good for us," Ezell said in his presentation to the trustees. "In a lot of the places we live, there's a high population of Southern Baptist churches. Where I live in Atlanta, there's one stretch with nine evangelical churches in a two-mile area."

"Driving into Philadelphia, we saw one evangelical church. It reminds us of our priority of impacting people's lives with the Gospel. We can't get away from that."



Ezell

We need to stay focused on impacting the lost with the Gospel."

Ezell's report to trustees and many of the activities surrounding the meeting focused on Send North America, the NAMB initiative focusing on church planting — especially in North America's largest cities and least-reached areas.

NAMB continues to make progress toward its goal to transition 50 percent of the mission entity's budget to church planting, Ezell reported.

"In 2009, NAMB spent 28% of its budget on church planting. In 2011, we are spending 37%, and in 2012 we will spend at least 42% of our budget on church planting," Ezell said, "so we are progressing rapidly toward our minimal goal of 50 percent."

Budget

In his third-quarter financial report to NAMB trustees, NAMB chief financial officer Carlos Ferrer announced year-to-date total revenues of \$101 million, down about two percent. Annie Armstrong Easter Offering revenues are 3.5% higher over the same period last year, Ferrer said.

Trustees approved a proposed budget of \$115 million for 2012, a 5.4% decrease from this year's \$121.5 million budget. Ferrer said the budget decrease resulted in part from the transfer of the World Changers/Power Plant missions programs and associated revenues from NAMB to LifeWay Christian Resources in Nashville.

The decrease also reflects a general belt-tightening trend at the entity, which is funded almost entirely by offerings given in Southern Baptist churches.

Disaster relief

To better support Southern Baptist Disaster Relief (SBDRL), trustees approved \$1.5 million in NAMB 2011 under-spending for the purchase of three 18-wheelers, two smaller trucks, and some pick-up trucks for deployment to future disaster sites across America. The vehicles will support state convention disaster relief efforts and will be designed toward giving Southern Baptists an almost immediate presence after a disaster.

"The purchase of this equipment for disaster relief is significant," Ezell said. "We want to bring more to the table when we arrive on the scene at future disasters. This is a significant upgrade, the largest NAMB has ever done in the disaster relief area."

Southern Baptists have more than 85,000 trained disaster relief volunteers and more than 1,500 units across North America, making Southern Baptists among the top three largest responders to disasters.

Ezell also thanked David Self, a NAMB trustee and executive pastor of First

Church, Houston, Texas, following the church's \$175,000 gift to Southern Baptist Disaster Relief. The entirety of that gift was forwarded to state conventions that have expended considerable resources this year on disaster relief responses.

New duties

Trustees approved additional responsibilities for Jeff Christopherson as regional vice president for the Northeast Region as well as Canada. Christopherson, 47, was appointed vice president — Canadian Region earlier this year, based in Toronto, as part of a regional restructuring by NAMB. He reports directly to Ezell.

Prior to coming to NAMB, Christopherson, a native Canadian, had served since 2009 as National Church Starting Team leader for the Canadian National Baptist Convention in Oakville, Ontario. He has worked as a church planter in various areas in Canada since 1995. He also served as senior pastor of First Church in North Battleford, Saskatchewan, from 1989-95.

Insurance changes

In line with reducing expense and shifting savings to church planting, NAMB trustees, following a lengthy discussion, adopted a motion whereby NAMB would phase out over five years the entity's traditional provision of benefits to some missionary personnel who receive less than half their salary from NAMB.

Over the years, NAMB has jointly funded many missionaries with state conventions and local associations and covered the cost of health insurance for some.

The change will primarily impact missionaries in southern states where state convention partners are the primary employer and have the most resources to pick up missionary insurance coverage. The motion is in keeping with advice from NAMB's legal counsel and with the entity's efforts to place more resources in under-reached and under-served areas.

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Islamic extremists execute 17-year-old Christian

NAIROBI, Kenya (BP) — Militants from an Islamic extremist organization in Somalia linked to al-Qaida beheaded a 17-year-old Christian near Mogadishu in September.

Guled Jama Muktar was killed by al-Shabbab militants



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in his home near Deynile, about 20 kilometers (12 miles) from the Somali capital, a journalist there told the Compass Direct news service.

The Islamic militants, who have vowed to rid Somalia of Christianity, had been monitoring Muktar's family since they arrived from Kenya in 2006, according to the source, who requested anonymity.

The al-Shabbab militants, who are fighting the transitional government for control of the country, knew from their observations of the family that they were Christians, the source said. "I personally know this family as Christians who used to have secret Bible meetings in their house," he said.

Based on talks with the boy's parents and their neighbors, the source said al-Shabbab members arrived at Muktar's home at 6 a.m. on Sept. 25 when his parents, whose names are withheld for security reasons, were already at work at their retail space at a market on the outskirts of Mogadishu.

The extremists found Muktar as he was preparing to go to school, the source said. "The neighbors heard screaming coming from the house, and then it immediately stopped," the source said. "After a while, they saw a white car leaving the homestead."

The neighbors informed the parents, who hurriedly returned home from their market stall. They quickly buried their son's body, fearing the militants would return and kill them as well, returned to their market space and then fled to an unknown destination, the source said.

"When the incident happened, the parents called to tell me that their son had been killed and that they feared for their lives," the source said. "Since then, I have not heard from them."

In another attack against Somali Christians, a kidnapped Christian convert from Islam was found decapitated Sept. 2 on the outskirts of Hudur City in southwestern Somalia. Juma Nuradin

Kamil was forced into a car by three suspected al-Shabaab terrorist members on Aug. 21, area sources said.

According to Compass, militants from al-Shabaab seek to impose a strict version of Islamic law, called sharia, but the government fighting to retain control of Somalia treats Christians little better than the al-Shabaab. While proclaiming himself a moderate, Somali President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed has embraced a version of sharia that mandates the death penalty for those who leave Islam.

Al-Shabaab was among several splinter groups that emerged after Ethiopian forces removed the Islamic Courts Union, a group of sharia courts, from power in Somalia in 2006. Al-Shabaab has been designated a terrorist organization by several western governments.

In the Lower Shabele region of Somalia earlier this year, two Muslim extremists murdered a member of a secret Christian community, area sources said.

THE VILLAGE VIEW



Dr. Rory Lee, Executive Director

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GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

SEPTEMBER 2011

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The Baptist Children's Village

Celebrates the Opening of our New

India Nunnery Campus

(Hester Cottage and Nunnery Cottage)

2615 Star Road

Florence, Mississippi 39073

Sunday, November 6, 2011

2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

(If you have questions call Cherylle Thoms at 601-922-2242)

BCV EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY IN NORTH MISSISSIPPI

The BCV employs Christian, mission-minded, husband and wife teams, without dependent children or pets, to serve in the position of Houseparents. The couples must be mature Christian adults with personal integrity, character and of good reputation with standards and ethics expected of any member of The Baptist Children's Village staff.

They receive a salary with benefits and are provided a private bedroom and meals while on duty. The primary job responsibility of Houseparents is to maintain a home-like environment that models healthy, Christian family living for children and youth residents. They are the primary caregivers and help with everything from transportation and homework to laundry and meals when on duty.

Houseparent responsibilities are varied and somewhat dependent upon which campus and to which cottage the couple is assigned. However, all Houseparents need to be in good physical, mental and emotional health. They must be cooperative and comfortable working in a team environment.

To apply for the current Houseparent opening in North Mississippi, please contact Celeste Cade at 601-922-2242 or ccade@baptistchildrensvillage.com.

A complete job description and application may be downloaded at www.baptistchildrensvillage.com.

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

Accept the Call

Exodus 3:1-6, 10-15; 4:10-12

By Huey Dedmon

Our passage today speaks to an area of Christian service that most people consider to be reserved for a specific few. I am speaking of the call of God in a person's life. Most church members feel that this call is reserved for the pastor and staff of the church. In reality, God is calling all Christians to serve Him.

The story of Moses encountering God at the burning bush gives us evidence of this fact. Moses was just an ordinary man whom God chose to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. His call was unique to the situation and I believe God has a unique call for all our lives. The challenge to us is to find that call and respond in obedience.

Encounter God's Presence

Exodus 3:1-6

Before we can hear and respond to God's call, we must have an encounter with God. Moses was tending sheep when he was confronted with something he had never seen, a bush that burned but was not consumed. When he went to investigate this amazing thing, God spoke to him. God told Moses to take off his sandals because he was standing on holy ground. (verse 5, HCSB) In an encounter with God, we are always confronted with the Holiness of God. Most of the time, we have a very casual attitude when we consider the Holiness of God. This passage reminds us that being in the presence of God demands that



Dedmon

we are serious in our intentions. If we really desire to know God, it will begin with His Holiness. God is Holy and we are not. Moses taking off his sandals is a sign that, with humility and respect shows how we are to approach God. He is God, we are not. Moses' encounter here also demonstrates God's proactive attitude toward us. He came looking for Moses and He came, through His Son Jesus, looking for us.

Understand God's Name

Exodus 3:10-15

God's instruction to Moses was to go to Egypt, stand before Pharaoh, and ask him to let God's people go. He also told Moses how Pharaoh was going to respond and what to do next. Moses asked God to tell him who he should tell the Israelite leaders had sent him. God's response is, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelite leaders: I

AM has sent me to you." (HCSB v.14) In verse 15, God uses His name most common to the Israelites, "Yahweh." The translation for Yahweh is "The Lord." Before we can speak in God's name, we must know God. His name reveals who He is. He is the great "I AM." He is "The Lord." To understand the name of God is a revelation of who He is. He is the God who listens to His people. God heard the cries for help from the Israelites. He was aware of how they were being treated by the Egyptians and His response was to call Moses to deliver His people. The great "I AM" hears our cries for help and will respond to our needs according to His will.

Depend on God's Power

Exodus 4:10-12

Much like us, Moses tried to conjure up things that would excuse him from doing God's work. Excuses like not being able to speak in public or asking God how they will know who has sent him. God always empowers

the people He chooses to do His work. The most freeing revelation we can have is that it is not up to us to do God's work. God told Moses to not worry about how or what he would say. He would give it to him as he needed it. We often focus on our abilities and forget that it is not our abilities that God is looking for, it is our availability. He wants. God was not sending Moses to Egypt alone, He was going with him. God's gifts to Moses, the staff, Aaron, and the ability to perform miracles are signs to Moses, and to us, that He goes with us. God does not want us to do His work. He wants to do His work through us.

We can make all the excuses we want to for not accepting the call of God for our life. The fact is, He is calling all Christians to serve Him. The question is: are we willing to stop the excuses and say yes?

Dedmon is associate pastor for education and outreach, Brandon Church, Brandon.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Can you be counted on?

Romans 13:1-14

By Marion D. Duncan

Christians have a moral obligation to show respect to their neighbors and to those in places of authority because government has its purpose and power as ordained by God. It is impossible to live peaceably with all people, but no vers of Jesus should never be the initiators of civil disobedience.

The Bible says that we "... all must yield to the government rulers. No one rules unless God has given him the power to rule, and no one rules now without that power from God. So, those who are against the government are really against what God has commanded. And they will bring punishment on themselves." (Romans 13:1-2 New Century Version)

Human government was instituted by God and derives its authority from Him. God gave

Noah the sword to establish man's self-rule under God. The responsibilities of government are to provide national safety and maintain national solvency. These protections are provided by tax dollars. "This is why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor." (Romans 13:6-7 NIV)

Paul instructs the Christian Jews to exemplify high-quality Christian behavior, in being responsible citizens who do what is right, recognizing government's God-given authority and demonstrating respect and support for it. There is no reason to fear government (authority) if we are doing what is right.



Duncan

If you tremble and feel guilty when you see a highway patrol car in your rearview mirror, perhaps it is because you are not respecting the authority of the speed limit.

From his discussion of laws governing many different relationships in a Christian's life, Paul moves to the continuing debt of love. People accumulate many personal debts during a lifetime, but all of them can be repaid somehow. "Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law... whatever commandments there may be, are summed up in this one rule: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" (NIV) The law of love provides for good relationships between the Christian and God and the Christian and his neighbor. When love is extended toward another person, its desire is for nothing but the best for that person in all things.

The second coming of Christ is the focus for verses

11-14. Paul described the time in which he lived as crucial and called for Christians to forsake common pagan practices of that era and to demonstrate the character of Jesus Christ. Christ's return was a common topic of conversation because of their great concern that they would be ready to meet Him. They felt that the time was very near and wanted to be alert to the significance of the time.

Paul talked about four things they could do, and we also, in view of the fact that at any moment the Lord could return. First, watch vigilantly. "Further, there is this — realize what time it is, that it is now high time to be awakened from sleep; for now your salvation is nearer than when you believed. Through the ages the coming of the Lord was anticipated with great zeal, but there was always one or more of the vital pieces of prophecy missing. There has probably never been a time before when every area of prophetic truth flashed out its warning lights like is happening today. Therefore keep watch,

because you do not know on what day your Lord will come." (Matthew 24:42 NIV) Second, war valiantly. "... let us put on the armor of light." Because he is saved, the believer is to put off the habits that had marked him as an unbeliever and put on the armor of light and battle against the "rulers of this world's darkness." Third, walk virtuously. "Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery (complete shamelessness), not in dissension and jealousy. Fourth, wait victoriously. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature."

When a Christian clothes himself with the Lord Jesus he, "puts on" all that Christ is. Allowing the Holy Spirit to work in our lives, love's moral conscience will make us sensitive to things which will shame us at the coming of the Lord.

Duncan is a member and pastor's wife from First Church, Macon.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.



Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if

submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items are generally not publishable. Photographs can not be returned. Please do not attach photos with tape or staples.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building-, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

Nepalese 'in shock' after devastating 6.9 earthquake

INDIA (BP) — "Prabuu. Prabuu. Prabuu," the Nepalese man chanted with force in his lungs as the walls began to crack and the earth beneath him shook violently. He stood from where he knelt in a door frame when the shaking subsided in northeast India, checked around his business to see if there was any damage and tried to contact his family.

A week later, the man shuddered as he remembered that night's 40 seconds of terror in India's Sikkim state when a magnitude 6.9 earthquake hit Sept. 18.

The Nepalese word prabuu means "god," or "lord." The man screamed out, as many Nepalese in the region did that night, to a generic god.

Most Nepalese are Hindu or Buddhist, adhering to works-based religions. In northeast India, it is commonly believed that the gods were displeased with their worship and sent the earthquake as punishment.

Chase Tozer, a Southern Baptist representative working in northern India, said most people remain in shock. Several hundred people in the area are immigrants who work on road and construction projects that were hit by the earthquake or landslides that followed.

The workers are leaving in droves to return to their hometowns.

Astrologers in Sikkim have told everyone another earth-

quake is coming, Tozer said. According to Timothy, a national partner, people are living in fear that has intensified since the earthquake.

Posted on several roads in the affected area are signs that read, "Post disaster precautions: 1. Don't panic. 2. Don't listen to rumors. 3. Drink only water, no alcohol," as if the basic lessons would help suspend or tame the fear and hopelessness that dwells inside people.

Instead of opening a door to reach the region's Nepalese with the Gospel, fear may hinder efforts as people believe they have to work harder to please their gods and be more devoted following the earthquake, Tozer said. It's another spiritual barrier.

Joseph Silwal, a pastor in Sikkim, said society and tradition play a major role in the rejection of the Gospel. "Some people know the name of Jesus," Silwal said. "They know the Gospel, but the problem is their fear of society."

For a Hindu or Buddhist, choosing to become a Christian is synonymous with choosing to abandon family, friends, and culture. New Christians often are shunned, persecuted and left to fend for themselves.

Religious traditions have been evident as people try to deal with the earthquake's aftermath. At one village, Buddhist monks read, chanted, and worshipped for 10 hours. A normal worship time lasts only an hour.



WAITING — People in the northern Indian state of Sikkim line the street in Mangan. Many people are afraid after a magnitude 6.9 earthquake and are living in fear of another earthquake that astrologers say is on the way. (Bp photo)

People would like to cremate the dead, but countless bodies buried beneath homes and mud are unrecoverable. Traditionally there is a special ceremony in which monks pray for the soul of the dead and then proceed with a cremation service. If a body is never found and given a proper ceremony, then the soul is never set free, according to Nepalese beliefs.

Tozer and national partners know how they can lead the hurting to comfort. "[I want to share] about God's eternity ... and His role as Shepherd in our lives," Tozer said.

He and his family witnessed firsthand the Lord's protection as they changed travel plans and arrived at their destination one day earlier than anticipated. If they had traveled as

planned, they would have driven on a road that was wiped away in the landslides.

Tozer hopes to share this testimony with people in the days to come.

"[God] will put us in the right place at the right time," he said. "He knows what tomorrow brings, and He supplies our every need — all as our Shepherd."

Prayer for Mexican city wracked with drug deaths yields positive results

EL PASO, Texas (BP) — Testimonies from churches along the Mexican border highlight the need for ongoing prayer that God would curb Mexico's drug violence. A 40-day, multi-denominational prayer effort in El Paso, Texas, for the neighboring Mexican city of Juarez was followed by a reduction in murders. Increased violence in July reminded participants to persist in their intercession.

"We continue to pray for Juarez," said Larry Wilkins, missions pastor at Cielo Vista Church, a Southern Baptist congregation that participated in the effort. "When we were going through the 40 days, there was much discussion from the pulpit and encouragement. We still have a prayer time in our services and will often lift up Juarez in our prayers."

Meanwhile, believers in Texas' Del Rio Uvalde Baptist Association, two hours west of San Antonio, have seen decreases in violence across the border in Acuña during three years of praying for the region.

During the 40 days leading up to Easter, approximately 20 El Paso congregations participated in a prayer campaign for Juarez, where warring drug cartels have increased the murder rate tenfold over the past several years, topping 3,000 homicides last year and 8,600 since 2008. Some call it the murder capital of the world.

Coordinated by the nondenominational Christian ministry El Paso for Jesus, the effort involved members of a different church each day meeting on a hill overlooking Juarez and praying from noon to 1 p.m. and again from 7 to 8 p.m.



FIGHTING EVIL — At the U.S.-Mexico border, much of the influx of traffic from Juarez visible via Google Earth is a daily reminder of violence among warring drug cartels that has hiked the murder rate tenfold in the Mexican border city over the past several years. About 20 El Paso congregations participated in a 40-day, multi-denominational prayer initiative for Juarez earlier this year. (BP photo)

that God would decrease the violence, protect commuters and change the hearts of drug cartel members perpetuating the bloodshed.

In June God answered their prayers: murders were down by nearly 200 in the first half of 2011. While there had already been 1,200 homicides after six months in 2010, this year's six-month total stood at 1,037, according to Fox News.

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